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S E C R E T PARIS 007527

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [FR](#)

SUBJECT: VIOLENCE IN SUBURBS: COMMENTS OF TERRORISM  
INVESTIGATING JUDGE

REF: A. PARIS 7525

[1](#)B. OCTOBER 25 PARIS POINTS

Classified By: POLITICAL MINISTER COUNSELOR JOSIAH ROSENBLATT, FOR REAS  
ONS 1.4 B/D

[1](#)1. (S) During a conversation November 3 with terrorism investigating judge Jean-Francois Ricard, Poloff asked for his analysis of recent violence in the suburbs (ref A). Ricard began by saying that no one in the French government should be surprised by what has happened. Successive governments have tried and failed to integrate suburbs with high immigrant populations. For "the last twenty years," said Ricard, the GOF has known that the suburbs have become areas where respect for the state has dried up. As a result of this inattention, the suburbs with high immigrant populations have lost their French identity and have built up an identity based on the "cites," (similar to the "projects"). French symbols of authority, like the fireman and policeman, are considered to be "assassins" and worthy of being targeted. In addition, gangs and radical Islamic groups have an interest in keeping the cites free of GOF influence to maintain their freedom of operation. French intelligence can only do so much, said Ricard. The areas need a substantial GOF presence, i.e., police and gendarmerie.

[1](#)2. (S) Ricard criticized many current French analyses as "tired leftist critiques" uttered by those who have no understanding of the world of the cites. He said they focused only on socio-economic problems, viewing the cites inhabitants as victims of precarious living situations -- young people who are unemployed and uneducated, with poor prospects for the future. When he had been an ordinary investigating judge in the northern suburb of Bobigny, Ricard said people were relatively well-off. They had cars and televisions and other material possessions. Other areas of France, such as the north near Belgium, were much poorer, said Ricard. The real problem was the GOF's failure to be present in these areas. Inhabitants developed a sense of being apart from French society, and over time, became proud of this. The combination of setting oneself apart, real and/or imagined grievances against the GOF, state inattention, and the interest of gangs and other groups, including Islamists, to accentuate this divide, has led to the current unrest, said Ricard.

[1](#)3. (S) If the unrest dies out "very quickly," this would be bad news, said Ricard. It would mean that gangs and other groups in the cites exert a powerful control over those currently burning cars and assaulting police. These gangs have no interest in triggering a massive GOF response, because it would mean the long-term "occupation" of the cites. If the unrest goes on for much more than a week, Ricard said it would signify that the cites have become completely anarchic. He speculated that one reason for the riots might have been Sarkozy's announcement in late October of an increased GOF security presence in the cites, including 17 companies of CRS (specialized crowd control police) and 7 platoons of specialized gendarmes (ref B). (Note: In a strangely prescient interview with Le Monde on October 25 about his plan to increase security in the cites, Sarkozy said that, since the beginning of 2005, "9000 police vehicles" in France have had stones and other projectiles thrown at them. Every night, Sarkozy continued, "between 20 and 40 " vehicles (presumably not only police vehicles) are burned or otherwise set on fire. End note.) Please visit Paris' Classified Website at: <http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/paris/index.c> fm Stapleton